Fine Dining and Fabulous Atmosphere: Feasting Facilities and Political Interaction in the Wari Realm

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Abstract:

Recently, Andean archaeologists have stressed that feasts were important events in the development of complex political formations because these events were where relations of power were established, maintained, and renegotiated (Cook and Glowacki 2003; Gero 2001; Janusek 2004). The activity of feasting holds a prominent role in descriptions of political interaction in the Andean past, and thus material remains of these practices should be well represented in the archaeological record. Many kinds of social gatherings documented historically and ethnographically can be considered feasts because they include suprahousehold meal preparation and consumption. The challenge to archaeologists lies in distinguishing among different kinds of events and outlining the role different types of feasts played in the social, political, and economic relations of a polity or more broadly in a multi-polity interaction sphere. To meet this challenge this case study will describe and compare the details of several Wari-related feasting contexts to understand the significance of the different events.

Keywords: Wari | feast events | Moquegua | archaeology

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FINE DINING AND FABULOUS ATMOSPHERE

Feasting Facilities and Political Interaction in the Wari Realm

Donna J. Nash

Recently, Andean archaeologists have stressed that feasts were important events in the development of complex political formations because these events were where relations of power were established, maintained, and renegotiated (Cook and Glowacki 2003; Gero 2001; Janusek 2004). The activity of feasting holds a prominent role in descriptions of political interaction in the Andean past, and thus material remains of these practices should be well represented in the archaeological record. Many kinds of social gatherings documented historically and ethnographically can be considered feasts because they include suprahousehold meal preparation and consumption. The challenge to archaeologists lies in distinguishing among different kinds of events and outlining the role different types of feasts played in the social, political, and economic relations of a polity or more broadly in a multi-polity interaction sphere. To meet this challenge this case study will describe and compare the details of several Wari-related feasting contexts to understand the significance of the different events.

Researchers examining feasting in many world regions have made useful categorizations in efforts to explain the salience of different types of feasting events. Two major categories have been used to

model the political economy of archaic Andean states. First, the "work feast" (see Dietler and Herbich 2001)—the direct exchange of food for labor in a festive atmosphere, often glossed as reciprocity in the Andean literature—is perhaps considered the most significant element of archaeological models (Morris 1985; Moseley 1992; Rostworowski de Diez Canseco 1999; Rowe 1946, 1982). Yet, work feasts are rather elusive in the archaeological record because they are presumably held where work is conducted in agricultural fields or on construction sites. Thus, both their preparation and consumption areas are likely destroyed by the work itself and are unlikely to be found in the typical setting of archaeological excavations. Second is the "patron-role feast," for which labor or other types of obligations are garnered through hosting a feast (see Dietler 2001). Such feasts may be staged in public venues in association with ritual events or may be small in scale and linked to more personal celebrations. Patron-role feasts have been implicated as a source of power through which ruling elites accumulate surplus and wealth (D'Altroy 2001; D'Altroy and Earle 1985; Morris 1982; Murra 1980, 1982). These events are also considered a form of reciprocity, as such events are hosted by elites to legitimize and maintain the exploitive and extractive asymmetrical relation between administrators and the populace (Isbell 1997; Kolata 2003a). Presumably, any exchange of labor would require a patron-role feast to establish the relationship and a work feast to execute a particular labor project. Thus, the former can conceivably serve as a proxy for the latter; however, it may not be that simple.

The emphasis on feasting has focused primarily on the occasion of consumption and the affiliated commensal relations. Equally important to understanding these processes are the means by which these meals are prepared and the relationships that bring the resources together to hold the event. In order to assess the importance of feasting to the political economy of an ancient society, it is paramount to differentiate between the archaeological correlates of daily meal preparation and that of feast making. It is also essential to understand the place of different feast events in the larger realm of political interactions by examining the elements of the meal and their respective settings.

Evidence of Wari feast events has been identified primarily through the presence of specialized serving wares, which occur in caches, floor smashes, and midden deposits (Brewster-Wray 1989; Cook 1987, 2001; Isbell, Brewster-Wray, and Spickard 1991; Ochatoma Paravicino and Cabrera Romero 2002). Such an approach to Wari feasting does not permit scholars to model political relations. The contexts of meal events or "feasting facilities" necessarily require two components: a production area and a consumption area. More than a decade of research at the Wari sites of Cerro Baúl and Cerro Mejía in the Upper Moquegua drainage of southern Peru reveals monumental structures and residential quarters of various sizes, containing a number of discrete assem-

blages reflecting suprahousehold meal production and consumption in several different contexts. These assemblages reflect the different hosts who mounted them, mirroring access to resources, relative power, and respective obligations. Together these finds provide an outline of the society's political organization and reveal the complexities of relations at work propagating Wari leaders and their power.

In this discussion, I describe the different manifestations of feasting uncovered in excavations of Wari-related contexts in the Upper Moquegua drainage of southern Peru. In the following analysis, I discuss the quality of the meal, how it was prepared, and the context of each feast in order to address how these meal events played a role in the overarching Wari polity. I also describe the facilities for feast preparation in order to provide details for understanding the nature of the relations associated with hosting each commensal event. First, however, I provide background for the interpretation of feasting in the Andes based on history and ethnography, as well as a brief introduction to the Wari polity and its settlement of the Moquegua study region.

Modeling the Role of Andean Feasting

Models of Andean administration founded on feasting are largely based on ethnography and on historical records of Inka (Inca) state practices. Archaeological ideas are largely an amalgam of history and ethnography. Ethnohistoric accounts of the Inka describe large-scale ceremonies such as Inti Raymi that reestablished fealty at regular intervals (Garcilaso de la Vega 1966 [1609]). This annual June solstice festival often hosted in Cuzco, or wherever the *Sapa Inka* (emperor) might be, gathered together elites from all over the Inka realm. The Inka had a full ceremonial calendar and there were many major celebrations that incorporated groups of different scales in their celebration. All such events appear to incorporate certain aspects; typically, guests brought gifts of many kinds; were entertained and feted; and witnessed large-scale ceremonial performances. Historical accounts describe the production of specialized foods and *chicha* (fermented beverage typically made of maize) by *mamaconas* (specially trained elite women). These women might be sequestered in the formal *aqllawasi* (chosen women) complexes or might have been members of the royal household. The identity of the feast-preparation staff likely differed based on the nature and scale of the celebration.

The Inka also fed large groups of people during work projects. Some chronicles describe that the Inka provided food as well as housing, clothing, and tools for those in the service of the state (Betanzos 1987 [1557]; Guaman Poma de Ayala 1980 [1615]). It is unclear how food was provided to these workers; however, Cieza de León (1959 [1553]: 163) relates that workers'

wives were directly involved in the preparation of these meals. In fact, only married men could be sent to mine because it was their wives' responsibility to cook their meals during this kind of *m'ita* (labor tax) service.

> If the province was a large one, it furnished Indians both to mine the metal and sow and work the land. If one of the Indians working in the mines got sick, he was allowed to return home at once, and another came to take his place; but none was assigned to the mines unless he was married so that his wives could look after his food and drink, and, aside from this, it was seen to it that they were supplied with food in abundance. (Cieza de León 1959 [1553]: 163)

Thus, the exchange of food for labor may not necessarily have required a suprahousehold meal event in direct relation to the work, but it is assumed that feasts would have been associated with initiating the original obligation, perhaps in a distant venue from the location of work. The material manifestations of these large-scale patron-role feasts should be easy to recognize but because of their public nature may have been regularly cleaned away. Finding evidence for such events perhaps relies more on the coordination and location of their preparation than on any other factor; the scattered but complementary residential production of potlucks is nearly impossible to discern versus large formal kitchens associated with a state-sponsored banquet that are hard to miss. Perhaps the crucial questions are, how did state feasting activity overlap with personal affairs such as weddings and funerals (potentially utilizing residential facilities) and at what point were specialized kitchens required to perform the affairs of the state?

Archaeological evidence of commensal politics in the ancient Andes is more typical at the scale of relatively smaller gatherings (see Brewster-Wray 1989) or related to ritual deposits (see Kolata 2003b). These finds may be indicative of what Michael Dietler (2001) describes as an "empowering feast," in which relative equals jockey for dominance or leaders demonstrate their relationship with ancestors or other supernaturals. Numerous small events may have been significant in establishing the leading or representative member of a group, promoting group solidarity, and at the highest level of nobility small extravagant feasts may have been important for establishing trade relations with other polities, negotiating the pecking order of succession, and ensuring access to wealth. In theoretical terms the difference between a patron-role feast and an empowering feast is important, but on the ground (or in it) both can be held at a large or small scale and in practice the same event can be used to "show up" a relative equal while at the same time obligating one's subordinates for the future. Given the potential variety of feasting events, it may be more appropriate to start with an examination of the particular archaeological remains that

distinguish different types of ceremonies rather than initially grouping them by one or more operational categories.

Suprahousehold food production and consumption are a common occurrence in traditional Andean communities and may have been equally integral to household reproduction in the past; however, all of these occasions are not equal within the lives of their hosts and those in attendance (Dietler 2003). These activities may address significant moments in the lives of individuals, such as birth, marriage, and death (Bolin 1998). Similarly, they can memorialize important happenings at the scale of the polity, such as accession, alliances, and the closures of sacred precincts (Cieza de León 1959 [1553]). All of these occasions can be used to establish or reinforce existing social hierarchies and create ties at various scales of asymmetrical obligations. Essentially, even a work feast can be put to these purposes; however, traditionally work feasts are held in a very different kind of spatial context.

Households may produce a large-scale meal to draw needed labor resources for planting or harvesting (Meyerson 1990). Community mobilization is often associated with suprahousehold food production and exchange. These events typically are sponsored by community leaders and are hosted to build or conduct maintenance on important infrastructural components of the group's collective economy, such as canals (Isbell 1978). States may finance large, long-term labor projects through providing meals to *corvée* laborers (Cieza de León 1959 [1553]). Yet, it is questionable whether all of these activities can be placed in the same category. How would the meal preparation associated with long-term labor contributions be manifested in the archaeological record?

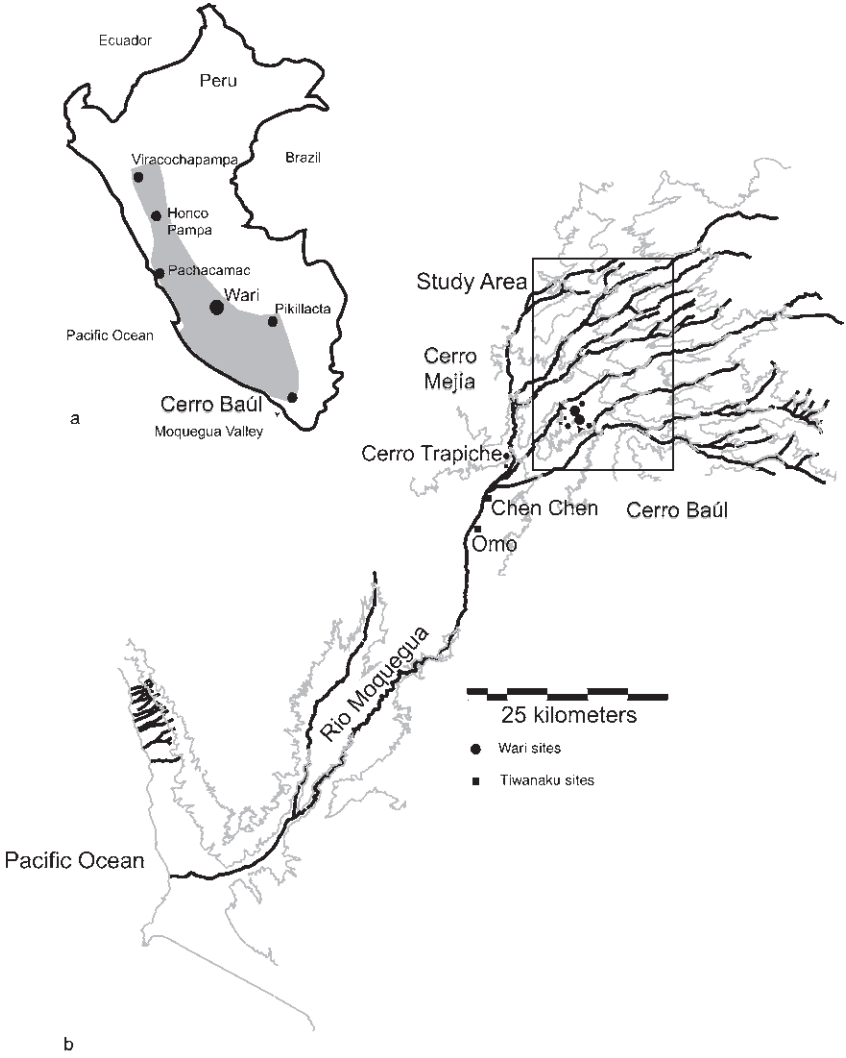
Similar activities at different scales may not be analogs. Scale and investment are crucial attributes that can be linked to significant questions such as how many guests were in attendance. Who was in attendance and how did that affect the resources gathered together for the event? What attributes of a particular feast event were dictated by the occasion being celebrated? The evidence of suprahousehold meal preparation may not always indicate the same kind of activity. The basic principle of reciprocity, which is primarily drawn from ethnography but projected back in time through the interpretations of Spanish accounts of the Inka, has been applied to the relations both among neighbors and between a household and the state (Rostworowski de Diez Canseco 1999). The term "reciprocity" is closely linked with exchanges of food for labor but also implies that a relationship has been established between equals or a leader and subordinate via prior exchange. Thus, reciprocity requires both a patron-role feast and a work feast to build a wall, harvest a field, or dig a canal. Undoubtedly, all feast events were important, yet we lack a rich multi-scalar description of how these interactive practices came together to build infrastructure, command the flow of goods, and fund the spread of

branded imperial luxury items and monuments. Therefore, this case study of Wari feasting practices emphasizes difference rather than stressing similarity, and attempts to place each event in cultural context rather than in operational categories.

The Wari Polity

The Wari state expanded sometime after consolidating its core region of origin in the Ayacucho area, centrally located in the sierra of Peru. Neighboring groups were brought under the polity's control or influence, material remains of which reflect different strategies of coercion and exchange networks stretching over the greater part of the Andes (Figure 4.1). Material remains for this expansive phenomenon date from AD 550 to 1000 (Williams 2001). At its maximum, this polity held sway and influence over an area stretching 800 miles (1,200 kilometers) through the Andean cordillera. At its center, the site of Wari was a sprawling cosmopolitan capital three square kilometers in size with an elaborate monumental core (Isbell, Brewster-Wray, and Spickard 1991). Wari politically operated as a state with a nested set of institutions and personnel that managed a variety of resources and their production, and it established power and legitimized and maintained political domination (Nash and Williams 2005). Empires are organized hierarchically, but many expansive polities combine direct hierarchical and indirect coercive relations to achieve control. It is probable that the Wari polity articulated with some regions through an asymmetrical peer-polity relationship or coercive indirect control; however, evidence in the Moquegua colony suggests direct administrative interaction as the mechanism of control.

The Wari state colonized the Upper Moquegua drainage sometime around AD 600 (Williams 2001). The occupation was managed through a formal provincial center built at Cerro Baúl and connected to the capital through the flow of goods. The people living in the colony do not appear to have originated in the Moquegua study area but were foreigners moved in by the empire (Moseley et al. 1991; Nash 2002). These colonists, regardless of their region of origin, were members of Wari society and active participants in provincial politics. The intrusive colony was planned primarily by Wari state officials and many structures were built with state-directed labor (Nash 1996). Motivation for the occupation in Moquegua remains unclear; however, the proximity of this frontier to the Tiwanaku heartland cannot be ignored. For whatever reason, Wari investment and control of this area were extensive, long-term, and well developed, providing a fertile region to study Wari state institutions and to test the role that feasting and suprahousehold food preparation played in the development of ancient Andean statecraft.



4.1. (a) *Major sites in the Wari Empire;* (b) *Wari and Tiwanaku sites in the Moquegua drainage.*

Cerro Baúl, a stunning mesa, divides the Torata and the Tumilaca drainages. The only route of modern access to the summit-top provincial center of Cerro Baúl is located in the Torata drainage, the most productive of the Moquegua tributaries. The Wari built a substantial irrigation system; more than twenty kilometers of canal course was cut through rugged terrain and several

of these areas are associated with the construction of agricultural terraces. This previously undeveloped upper valley region was transformed through large labor investments, the size of which suggests that the colony could have been self-sustaining (Williams 1997; Williams and Sims 1998). Cerro Mejía (the largest residential settlement), Cerro Petroglifo, Pampa del Arrastrado, and several clusters of residential remains on the western and northern flanks of Cerro Baúl are also in the Torata Valley. El Tenedor overlooks the Tumilaca tributary, and there is a site in the lower middle Moquegua Valley, Cerro Trapiche (Figure 4.1). The colonial population could have exceeded 1,000 (Williams and Sims 1998); however, some occupations remain to be dated and it is unclear how the population may have fluctuated with organizational shifts in the colony over time (see Nash and Williams 2005; Williams and Nash 2002).

The provincial center is located atop a steep-sided mesa formation. Most of the summit of Cerro Baúl is covered by stone masonry ruins, including the remains of administrative buildings, elaborate residential compounds, temple constructions, and ceremonial monuments. The architecture is agglutinated and it is difficult to categorize the organization of the site. In broad terms, monumental, high-quality constructions were built on large, artificially flattened surfaces of the summit, and more modest dwellings and smaller buildings are located on terraces descending to the sheer edge of the mesa. Severe erosion prevents accurate estimates of maximal site size and population.

The building efforts on Cerro Baúl and habitation of the site reflect an exorbitant amount of labor investment. The closest source of water was located 600 meters below (Feldman 1989). The building stone was predominantly obtained from quarries on the site; however, the mortar and plaster for the walls and floors would have required tons of clay and water. The occupation on Cerro Baúl represents the command of large quantities of resources not only for its construction but for the extra effort its location demanded merely to sustain daily activities.

The settlement at Cerro Mejía is more modest; however, its construction also reflects a large labor investment. The organization of the site is more easily described because the architecture is not agglutinated but rather dispersed over the summit and southern slope of the hill. Occupation of the site was divided by clear and significant boundaries; large wall segments ring the summit-top structures. A monumental staircase connects the summit with workshops and religious facilities on the southern slope, and smaller residential structures are built on domestic terraces above the canal. The slopes are divided by the remnants of large walls into six areas. At least four, and possibly all of these areas, are residential barrios. Each residential barrio contains eight or more house structures of varying sizes. The site of Cerro Mejía was abandoned some time shortly after AD 800. All the houses that were excavated on Cerro Mejía seem

to have been occupied during the same period in the early Middle Horizon (Nash 2002).

The Moquegua Wari colony is unique because it is the only known region where investigators have reported Wari and their contemporaries, the Tiwanaku, settled in such close proximity. Cerro Trapiche's location suggests it may have had some role in interaction with the Tiwanaku colonists occupying the lower middle valley zone. Regardless, Cerro Baúl was likely a formal venue for relations with this peer polity, making the nature of commensal politics at Cerro Baúl even more significant.

Meals and Their Contexts

The sample described below is drawn from contexts on Cerro Baúl and the adjacent settlement on Cerro Mejía. The archaeological assemblages from these contexts are of two types: some spaces appear to exhibit merely de facto refuse (see Lightfoot 1993; Schiffer 1987; Stevenson 1982) and others the remains of closure events (see Cook 2001). Closure events varied and could include materials from daily use, along with feast remains and dedicatory offerings. Vessels and tools were purposely smashed in some cases among evidence of feasting, whereas in other instances items were left intact. The nature of the closure events is relative to the status of the house occupants or the importance of the venue in state ceremony. It is possible that structure abandonment in Wari society was commonly associated with a ritual that required a feast of some kind. Nevertheless, with careful analyses it can be determined whether feast events were significant throughout the life of a structure rather than merely a part of its closure, an important point discussed further below. In the following, I describe several different contexts at Cerro Mejía and Cerro Baúl that exhibit evidence of meal preparation, meal consumption, or the disposal of feasting remains.

Daily Meals in Commoner Houses

A typical house on Cerro Mejía consisted of a single enclosed room with attached walled patio space or two or more enclosed rooms sharing a single patio (Figure 4.2a, Unit 5). Residential structures on the terraced slopes had sparse faunal remains that typically consisted of fragmentary splintered bone ground into the house floor. No *cuy* (domesticated guinea pig) was present. The few faunal elements from these contexts that could be identified suggest the use of *charki* (a dried camelid product) (see Marcus, Sommer, and Glue 1999). The enclosed rooms were associated with meal preparation, and hearths were small with no formal structure (Nash 2002).

4.2. (a) *Unit 5 on Cerro Mejía;* (b) *Unit 4 on Cerro Mejía.*

Since each enclosed room had its own hearth, even multi-component households did not exhibit an overly large cooking feature that would suggest meals could be prepared for more than the people living in the structure. Hearths were small and ranged from 3,200 square centimeters to 4,000 square centimeters. Enclosed rooms were small square spaces that would have prevented more than one or two people from actively attending food over the hearth.

All houses had vessels that could be used to consume a special meal, and larger houses exhibited more fragments of such vessels. Evidence of consumption was predominantly located in the patio of most houses. The cluster of fragments of these vessels suggests in some residences that a pot smash or closure event may have coincided with the abandonment of the structure. If a feast was associated with this event, there is no indication to suggest that it included people beyond the members of the household or special foods of any kind.

An Ample Meal at the Barrio Leaders' House[1]

Unit 4 on the slopes of Cerro Mejía demonstrated features to suggest that feasting probably did coincide with the abandonment of this structure and that feasts including members from outside the household may have been an occasional occurrence in this residence (Figure 4.2b). Unit 4 had a rectangular enclosed room with an exceptionally large hearth, over 7,400 square centimeters. The larger space would have allowed more people to attend several vessels cooking over the large, ovoid hearth. The hearth was associated with an unusually large quantity of charred camelid bone, nearly a kilogram (963.6 grams), which is more than four times the amount from any other house on the terraced slopes (Nash 2002).

This enlarged food-preparation facility and a substantial amount of food remains are within a residence that also has extra space in the form of what could be called an entrance hall. It is worth remarking that this structure was remodeled at some point during its occupation to add this meeting space and a small alcove with a rounded back wall. These areas are relatively clean in comparison with the patio and enclosed room, which exhibit typical patterns of domestic activities. In the instance of Unit 4, there was an enlarged food-preparation feature and the enclosed room was larger as well. The meal was not apparently rich or exotic but in terms of protein quantity may have been beyond the normal fare. Serving wares were more numerous in this residence and demonstrate a variety of forms and pastes, perhaps reflecting more access to exchange. They were recovered from a special space added to the house to facilitate interactions with community members and perhaps to engage in

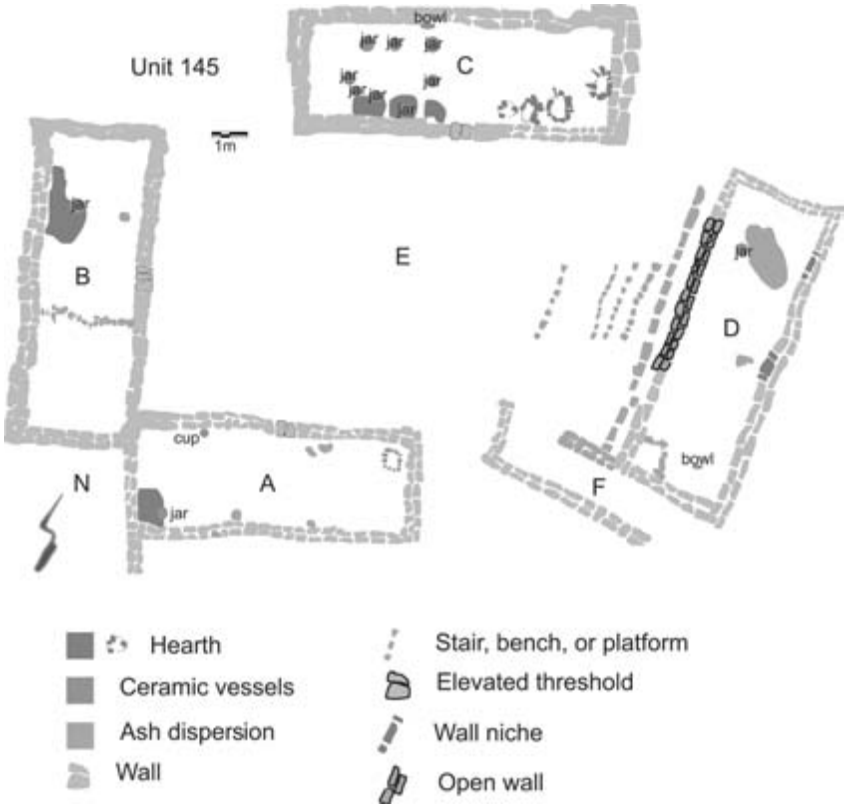
commensal politics. Although relatively small, this residence had access to food resources beyond their neighbors and had a room seemingly designated to accommodate gatherings.

A Festive Meal in a Town Leader's House

On the summit of Cerro Mejía, residential clusters are much larger, including larger patios and more numerous enclosed rooms. In many instances two or more houses share common walls and exist as residential clusters. Because of their size, two structures were selected for horizontal excavations (Unit 145 and Unit 188; see Nash 2002) and a third was tested (Unit 136), resulting in a small sample from the summit. There are, however, marked differences between summit structures with the patio group form and those without; the associated remains and activities indicate clear status differences between the occupants. This difference is further supported by the elaboration of the stone masonry, but not the size of the structures. It is possible that the emulation of the Wari patio group form was an elite prerogative; Unit 145 is a residence exhibiting this Wari architectural canon of construction (Figure 4.3), which replicates patterns of residence at the Wari capital, provincial centers across the sierra, and Cerro Baúl, the local center (see Cook and Glowacki 2003; Isbell 1991; McEwan 1991; Nash and Williams 2005; Schreiber 1992). Unit 145 is one of two centrally located residential structures on Cerro Mejía that reflect the use of this form (the other is Unit 136), which I refer to as a "Wari patio group."

Within Unit 145, Room C is a specialized context for the intensified preparation of food. It contained seven hearths of two types and numerous remains of cooking and storage vessels as well as 2.5 kilos (2,508.1 grams) of charred camelid bone, five times as much as any of the cooking zones in the other summit residences on Cerro Mejía. Stone-lined hearths, four to the east of the door, are presumed to have been for boiling. These special features have stone borders to support a conical-based vessel and were full of wood briquettes, a fuel not recovered from any other context. No other house structures on Cerro Mejía exhibited hearths of a substantial nature that could have been used for brewing chicha, a fermented beverage; it may be that its production was reserved as an elite prerogative. The three hearths with no structure (typical of most hearths at the site) were full of burnt camelid bones. This facility had minimal productive debris, suggesting a great deal of preliminary preparation took place elsewhere (Nash 2002).

Rooms A and B demonstrate qualities of typical households yet are incredibly clean in comparison with the domestic waste present in other residential structures. As there are only two family units within the structure and they



4.3. *Unit 145 on Cerro Mejía.*

each have their own food-preparation facility, it seems that the facilities in Room C are for the preparation of meals to be shared with more than the members of the household. The large food-preparation facility was located in a separate room apart from the cooking and living areas of residences of the dwelling. This has implications for the social relations between those actively preparing the food and people dwelling in Rooms A and B. It is possible that personnel from outside the household, most likely women—perhaps female kin of subordinate administrators—contributed their labor in suprahousehold meal-preparation events. Women living in Unit 145 may have contributed their labor as well or taken a more supervisory role. Based on depositional evidence, it also seems that some preliminary food preparation may have taken place in other facilities before being cooked in Room C.

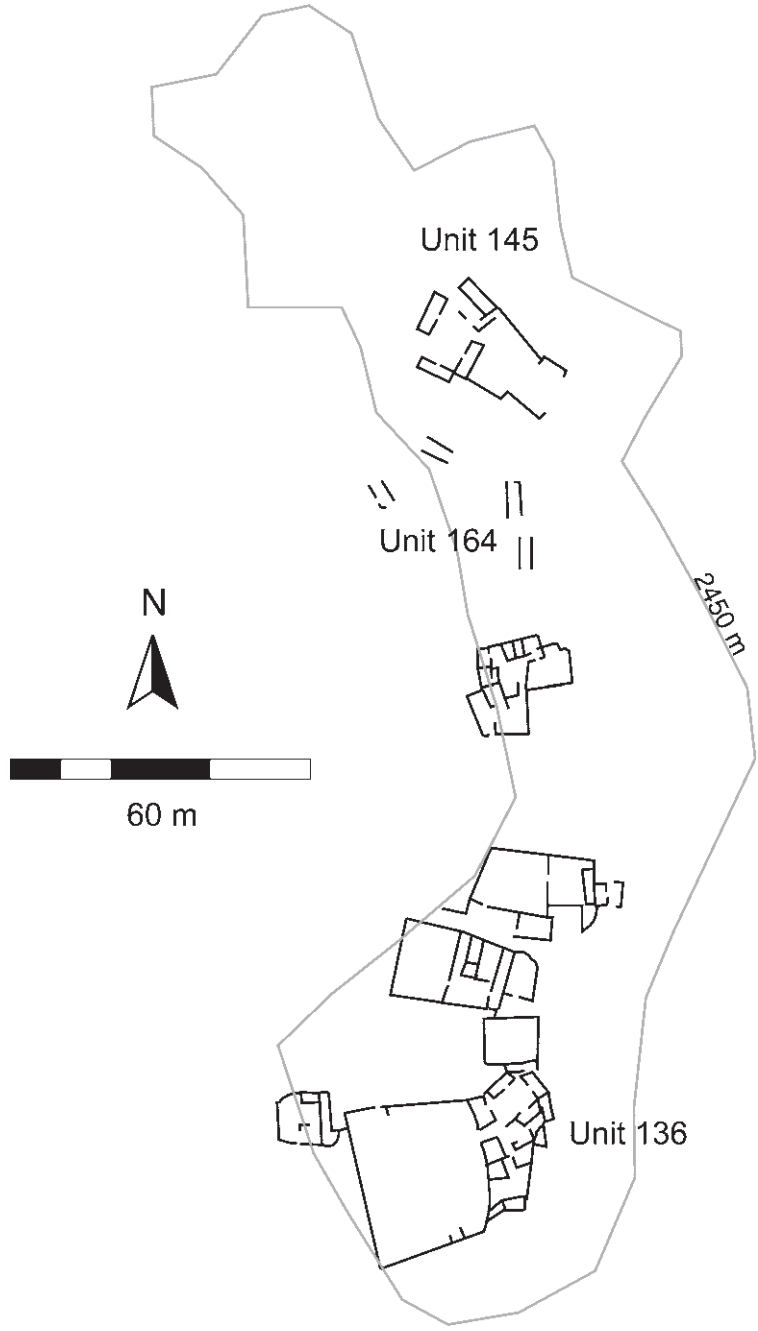
Room D of Unit 145 and the central patio space provide a venue to hold audience with subordinates. Room D is elevated, has a floor paved with flagstones,

and has a broad opening toward the patio. Its exterior retaining wall is lined with a bench. Room D was accessed by ascending one level to a broad stair or low platform (approximately 140 centimeters in stride) and three additional narrow stairs. In use, the architectural features of this structure provide the definition of the interaction and relative status of three groups of individuals: those on the patio floor, those one step above on the low platform, and those even farther above presiding over matters from the elevated room. This residential structure was clearly designed to accommodate sociopolitical interaction and to prepare and provide feasts to visitors, subordinates, and perhaps large groups from the colony and surrounding settlements in the adjacent central platform complex (Nash 2002).

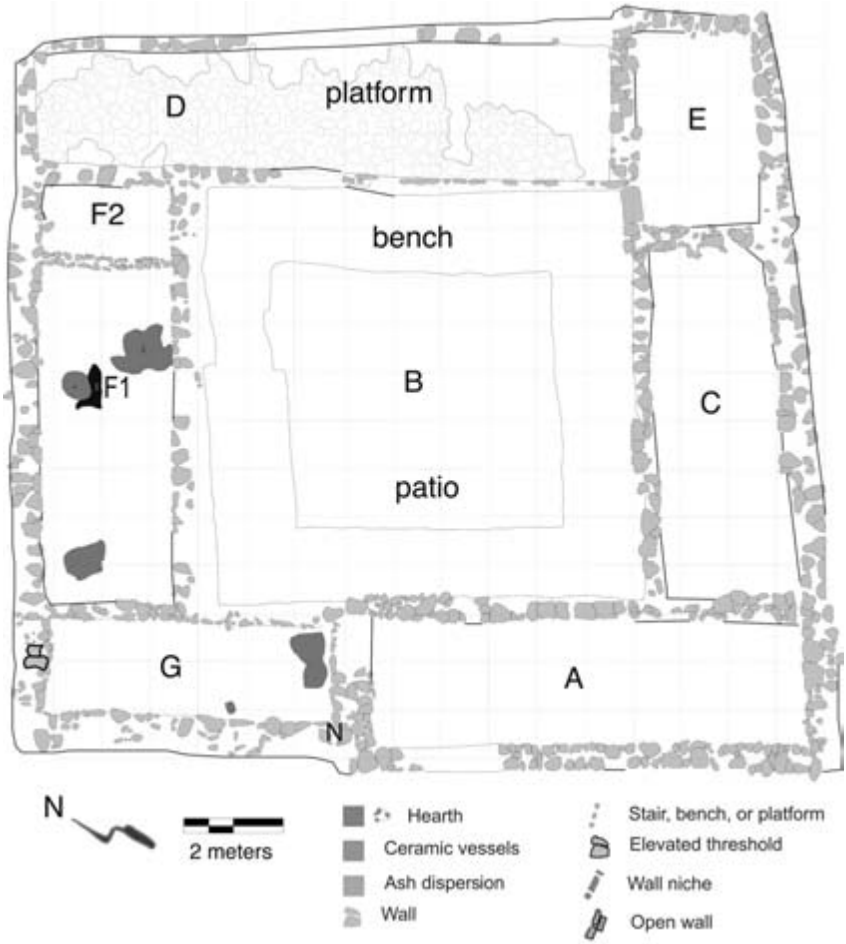
Centrally located on the summit of Cerro Mejía are two main platforms to the east and two smaller platforms to the north of a large public space, Unit 164 (Figure 4.4). This plaza measures sixty-five meters by seventy-five meters and may have been a venue for large-scale gatherings. Currently, the only evidence suggesting this space may have been related to feasting is its proximity to the large-scale meal-preparation facilities in both Unit 145 and Unit 136. It is important to note that these residential buildings are located on either side of the public space and both had feast-preparation facilities located in the space of a Wari patio group (Figures 4.3 and 4.4). Future investigations on Cerro Mejía will be designed to model the activity or activities that took place in this significant public venue and the more elaborate elite residential structure, Unit 136.

A Grand Feast in a Provincial Palace

To date, excavations at the provincial center have revealed that Cerro Baúl maintained strong ties with the capital in Ayacucho and had access to goods from around the empire and beyond. Unit 9, a formal patio group residence, is located in the eastern portion of the monumental core. It consisted of a nearly square walled space with five rectangular rooms on three sides of an open patio and an elevated platform along the eastern side (Figure 4.5). This elite residential setting had a stone paved floor, reflecting the ruins of a once-fabulous dwelling. The central patio space was found filled with the remains of a grand feast, represented by smashed vessels and a diversity of food remains, including the bones of fine cuts of camelid meat, several species of fish, river shrimp (de France 2004), and corn. Benches along all four sides of the patio provided seating for gatherings and sociopolitical relations. Surprisingly, Unit 9 had no facilities suitable to prepare a meal of this size; the structure was relatively clean and lacked tools or evidence of many household tasks common to smaller residences on Cerro Mejía.

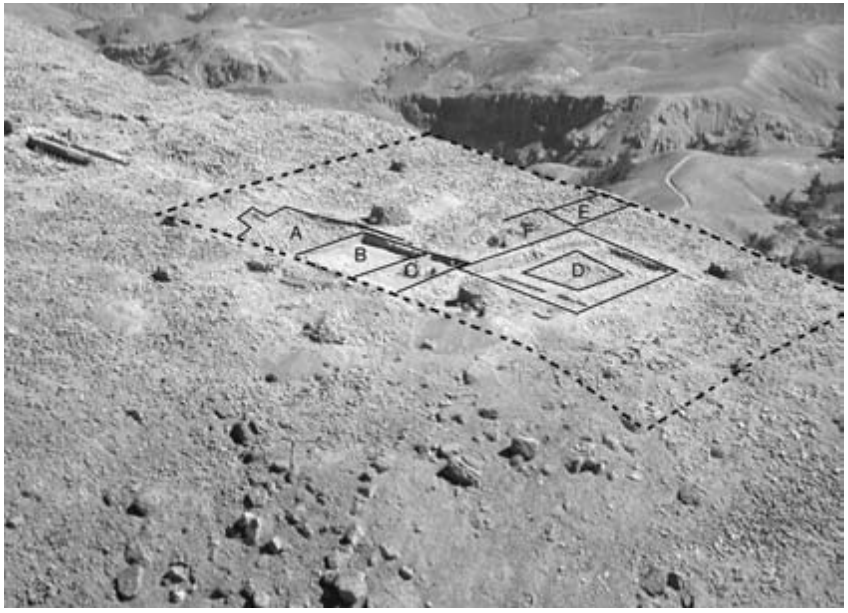


4.4. *Map of structures on the summit of Cerro Mejía.*



4.5. *Unit 9 on Cerro Baúl.*

Unit 7, located on a lower terrace outside the palace complex, was an open bilevel terrace, a special facility for preparing meals and storing *molle* berries. Molle was found stored in a large pit and its presence suggests that the production of chicha was taking place in the vicinity. Molle can be added to corn chicha to change its flavor and color or can be fermented and used to make *chicha de molle*. Grindstones, beans, and faunal remains suggested this zone was also used to prepare meals. The density of grindstone implements and the absence of typical household activities beyond food preparation indicate this was a specialized facility rather than a residential context. Future excavations



4.6. ***Outline of the palace complex in Sector A on Cerro Baúl. Excavated spaces include A: the entrance hall (Unit 25); B: a ceramic workshop (Unit 40A); C: an open green space or garden with trees (Unit 40C); D: the central patio group residence (Unit 9); E: sloping area with three terraces, including a modest kitchen with a single small hearth (Unit 41B); F: a partially excavated plaza with evidence of pottery production, weaving, and lapidary work (Unit 41E). Photo courtesy of Ryan Williams.***

in the areas adjacent to the palace complex will seek to identify the articulation between this production zone and elite residential spaces.

Together this evidence suggests that high-quality meals were available to the elite residents on Cerro Baúl and that people attached to the elite household prepared and potentially served chicha and meals to elite residents and their guests in Unit 9 (Figure 4.6, Area D). The feasting remains recovered in the structure represent an abandonment ritual with numerous ceramic vessels purposely smashed in the center of the patio. This evidence alone would not support the assumption that feasting was a regular event in this residential venue. However, the features of Unit 9, such as the elevated platform to the east, suggest that gatherings of some kind, perhaps with asymmetrical interaction, occurred in the structure and the benches provided a place to sit and have lengthy discussions, conduct political interactions, and foster commensal relationships.

Similar to Unit 4 on Cerro Mejía, it seems that there may have been an "entrance hall," a more accessible area in the elite palatial compound, to interact

with members outside the household. Unit 25, on Cerro Baúl (Figure 4.6, Area A), located west of Unit 9, is an open plaza with benches along all four walls and a large recessed niche along the west. This niche may have been a place of honor for the highest-ranking official attending events in this reception hall or meeting area. The feast-preparation facilities in Unit 7 may have also provided meals for commensal politics in this venue. There is no doubt that feasting activity was associated with the ritual closing of the elaborate elite compound. Currently, the hypothesis that feasting was a regular part of either structure relies more on the features and design of the structures than on the remains recovered. Unit 25 on Cerro Baúl represents a specialized arena for face-to-face interaction and would have been a more formal venue of commensal politics than Unit 9, which seemingly lies at the center of relatively more private elite quarters.

It is significant that Unit 9 lacked the facilities to prepare the meal last consumed within the residence's central patio. If the size and organization of Unit 9 on Cerro Baúl are compared with those of Unit 145 on Cerro Mejía, one might expect these buildings to have similar food-preparation facilities. However, the context of the Unit 9 Wari patio group within a larger provincial compound exhibits different relations between food-preparation personnel and meal consumers and demonstrates a significant difference in access to labor and resources between provincial and regional administrators. If the size of Units 9 and 25 in the palace on Cerro Baúl is examined, there is not a substantial difference, yet these two venues lie within the same compound and must have been perceived and used in somewhat different ways.

A Stately Brew

Unit 1 on Cerro Baúl contains both the remains of a large chicha-production facility and numerous smashed elaborate vessels (Moseley et al. 2005). The structure consists of a central trapezoidal patio with rectilinear rooms on three sides (Figure 4.6). The pattern of abandonment and associated artifactual assemblage suggests it was a specialized facility. It may be, however, that houses reflect different patterns of use in relation to the status of elite occupants in the political hierarchy or the differences between assemblages reflect chronological transformations in the roles of residential settings in political interactions. These issues require more excavation and detailed spatial analysis to assess.

Unit 1 has an unusual L-shaped room bordering the patio to the east and north. The northern section of this room contains a large-scale brewing facility. Similar to Unit 145 on Cerro Mejía, the hearths associated with boiling were elaborated with stones. In this instance, large rectangular slabs were placed vertically. Evenly spaced and parallel to the north wall, these stones supported at

least seven large brewing vessels. Based on the fragments of smashed jars recovered from the floor of this facility, each jar is estimated to have held from 120 to 140 liters of chicha. Each vessel had a deep hearth pit to either side (Moseley et al. 2005). The ashy remains of these fires contained burnt cuy droppings among other fuels and high-quality trash—potentially offerings—that perhaps added to the potency of the fermented beverage. As in the specialized preparation area in Unit 7 just outside the palace, molle was stored in the brewery and may have been a primary ingredient of elite Wari chicha.

Fragments of ornate decorated wares were smashed and scattered throughout the Wari patio group and this action was followed by the burning of all rooms. These structures were purposely destroyed as large metates were used to collapse the roof and superstructure (Williams 2001; Williams and Isla 2002). Vessels recovered from Unit 1 represent the finest assemblage excavated on Cerro Baúl. Motifs represented on small jars and oversized tumblers are identical to objects recovered at the capital and may be imports. Bowls from this context resemble Nazcoid conventions, whereas large tumblers depicting the front-face deity demonstrate stylistic execution of motifs reflecting a high degree of Tiwanaku influence (Feldman 1998; Moseley et al. 2005; Williams and Nash 2002).

The patio, trapezoidal in shape, contained the remains of twelve large jars along the north wall, which were presumed to be fermentation vessels for large quantities of chicha (Feldman 1998). In consideration of the quality and number of other ceramic vessels (which include consumption wares such as bowls and a large number of cups) and the large-scale brewing facility, Unit 1 was clearly an important setting. Yet, it remains unclear if the decorated vessels in the brewery's assemblage pertain to stored serving vessels affiliated with the use life of the brewery or were dedicatory introductions associated with the elaborate Wari ritual offering tradition related to building closure (Cook 1987, 2001). Nevertheless, the vessels associated with Unit 1 are the largest cluster of decorated wares found thus far on Cerro Baúl, indicating that the brewery and the production of chicha for feasting in this context were significant to the Wari occupants of the provincial center.

Interpreting the Remains of Feasts

Feasting was an important element of sociopolitical relations at the Wari provincial center, Cerro Baúl, and other colonial settlements like Cerro Mejía. Suprahousehold food preparation and the hosting of commensal events were planned activities in households at different levels of the political hierarchy and were part of the houses' intended use and original design or added through remodeling as the householders gained status in the community (Nash 2002). That some of these occasions were linked to the Wari state's political economy

can be inferred through the flow of goods as gifts and tribute between levels in the settlement hierarchy (see Nash and Williams 2009).

The frequency of feasting in these venues cannot be directly inferred by the specialized food-preparation area or the design of the spaces but rather must be linked to the accumulation of detritus from such events, which would be found in middens. Middens are problematic because it is difficult to link deposits to the original venue of activity. Materials derived from these contexts can be quantified; however, such practices raise concerns about the validity of calculations based on recovered volumes. Middens were repeatedly burned, reducing organic material to ash. Although the production of chicha de molle leaves behind large quantities of desiccated seeds in stratified pit and sheet midden deposits, the production of corn chicha remains archaeologically elusive at Cerro Baúl. Nevertheless, from a theoretical perspective, I suggest that a venue would not be designed merely for the event that would end its use, but rather that spatial venues are designed around specific activities and the primary modes of their use (Nash 2002; Norberg-Schulz 1985; Rapoport 1990). The design of spaces in each of these examples reflects the expectation and planning of gatherings and the facilities to prepare meals for groups beyond that of the household (Nash and Williams 2005).

The contexts I have described and the related scales of gathering and meal preparation within these spheres are not in character with large work feasts on the order of a community. The central public plaza platform complex on the summit of Cerro Mejía may have been an important point of articulation between the state and the colonists of various regional settlements, but this awaits further investigation. I suspect that if large-scale suprahousehold food-preparation facilities were directly associated with the daily labor contributed to build the monumental and extensive remains in Moquegua, these were temporary, the venues dependent on the location of the work, and the serving wares went home again with the laborer. Alternatively, foodstuffs may have been provided to laborers and prepared on the level of individual households. Regardless, given that expanded kitchens were located in residences on Cerro Mejía, it is likely that the wives and other female kin of regional leaders, barrio leaders, and perhaps the consumers themselves were integral to the preparation of large-scale meals at these levels of the sociopolitical hierarchy. In contrast, leaders on Cerro Baúl may have relied on specialists, either attached to their households or pertaining to state institutions, to mount feasts in different contexts.

None of the contexts described above would have provided feasts of a scale and duration to support the labor investment evident in the Wari colony. In just a brief time, Wari colonists completely modified the landscape, carved out the course of a twenty-kilometer canal, and built two-story stone buildings

on the top of a mesa 600 meters above the closest source of water to make the mortar. Yet, the small-scale gatherings described above likely contributed to these achievements. Political interactions at these scales would allow asymmetrical relations to be established, negotiated, and maintained; the exchange of goods among groups could be arranged or executed, alliances could be forged, and group membership through ritual could be maintained.

The relations of suprahousehold food preparation in these different venues demonstrate the sociopolitical articulations drawn upon for meal preparation related to feasting events in different contexts. The potential mechanisms for mobilizing the labor and resources for larger commensal events potentially relied heavily on the relations among women. The labor dispersed in the different contexts described above could have been pooled, and with the appropriate hierarchy of supervision large feast events were certainly possible. How these events were perceived, from where resources were drawn, and who presided as host are important questions that await further study.

Regardless of whether researchers will ever uncover an elusive archaeological record long ago plowed under in a fertile field (see Bauer 1996), theoretical models must go beyond recognizing feasting. Consumption is only one aspect of the interactions and relations created and drawn upon in the hosting of a commensal event. At the same time, extraordinary meal events should not be reduced to a single kind of mechanism based on knowledge of the reciprocal philosophy so prevalent in the Andean literature of the past and present. Each of the spaces described above exhibits different facilities that played a political role in Wari society. That these venues were all locations of commensal politics seems likely; however, the linkage of these activities to achieving the goals of Wari state officials remains a matter for further exploration and theoretical modeling. In other words, commensal politics as they related to state institutions and household reproduction seem to have come in a variety of flavors and our research should address the important differences rather than stress the ubiquity of a seemingly common practice.

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Note

1. The subtitle to this section purposefully indicates a plural possessive "leaders" in response to a reviewer's suggestion that "Barrio Head" should be changed to "Barrio Headman." Given the Andean ethnohistoric literature, as well as some ethnographic studies, it is plausible to assert that the focus of power at the head of a household or kin group was the married couple, and it is an equally viable assumption to assertions that all leaders or heads of household were men. I have selected the former assumption. In the early years of contact, the Spanish encountered female rulers on the North Coast of Peru (Rostworowski de Diez Canseco 1999). Spanish documents also describe that Inka queens owned and managed sizable estates (Covey 2006). Thus, it is likely that women hosted some feasts in the Wari Empire.

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